

“The Grimy Uni Flat is Gone”: Why Student Property is Changing for Tenants and Investors

A well-known property entrepreneur says a never-before-seen shift in industry conditions is forcing landlords to quit the market amid rising demand for student housing.

James Coupland, 30, began buying and renovating properties while still studying at university himself, and is now calling on landlords to adapt to the changing market – as well as encouraging more young people to invest in property to help meet nationwide demand.

Findings from [the 2025 National Student Accommodation Survey](#) suggest that the UK is in the midst of a student housing shortage, which correlates with a wider supply issue across the population.

It is thought that rising costs, changes to tax rules and upcoming legislation such as the Renters Rights Bill are causing some landlords to exit the market entirely.

However, James believes students are also more discerning about where they live, and that property owners and managers have a crucial duty in providing quality homes.

“The old notion of a grimy uni flat is gone. Today’s young people want thoughtfully-designed properties that feel like their homes, equipped with smart tech and pleasant interiors.

“I’ve also seen landlords like myself restructure their businesses or even abandon student lettings altogether in favour of short-term rentals, which can create the impression there’s a shortage of student housing.

“There might be short-term shocks in the market, but it is all about adaptability and, ultimately, giving students a better standard of living while staying competitive as a business.”

With £14,000 in savings as a young student, James bought a small house of his own to live in and gradually renovated it room-by-room before recycling his capital into the next investment.

Since then, he has kept himself busy running his own mortgage brokerage, James Property Mortgages, an estate agency, James Property Club, and a property-focused social media brand with over a million followers (@jamesproperty_).

To strengthen his offering and meet students’ expectations, James recently partnered with Loc8me, a leading UK student accommodation provider with properties in 16 university towns and cities.

He says that Loc8me’s expertise in managing high-quality student housing has not only improved his tenants’ overall experiences but has also ensured full occupancy across his portfolio.

He added: "Despite private rentals being the most sought-after option for students, too many properties go unoccupied, there are problems with unsatisfactory conditions, and communication issues between tenants and landlords."

"Working with a partner like Loc8me gives landlords the confidence that their properties are maintained to the highest standards, while students benefit from reliable, professional management."

Loc8me currently manages more than 2,500 properties, housing over 7,600 students across the UK. Its growth indicates how the student rental market is changing, with increasing demand for consistency and professionalism across different regions.

"Property owners need a partner who can align with their standards and manage properties to the high standards landlords and students should both aspire to."

In 2023, James started mentoring at the James Property University, which has helped over a thousand students begin their property investment journeys in the UK and abroad.

"Seeing someone go from complete beginner to buying their first investment and beyond in the current climate has been the best part of mentoring these fledgling investors," James continued.

"It's grown into a full community, and we're building tools and apps to support investors at every step. Helping people gain confidence and make smart choices in the early stages of their career is so rewarding."

Looking forward, James expressed his confidence in the future of the property industry despite the regulation changes.

"I see demand increasing, but students are rightly more picky nowadays in terms of quality.

"These regulation changes may feel like a challenge now, but I believe they're shaping a stronger, more professional industry, and I'm proud to be part of that evolution."

"My journey started with a single renovation and a lot of determination. That same drive is what's helping me adapt today so I can continue to grow tomorrow."

-ENDS-

About loc8me:

- Founded in 2008 by Raffaele Russo, loc8me started with a single office in Loughborough and a vision to transform student lettings.
- Now operates in 16 major university cities across the UK, including Loughborough, Durham,

Nottingham, Manchester, Leeds, Cardiff, Newcastle, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leicester, Hull, Bath, Bristol, Lincoln, Exeter and York.

- Manages over 2,500 properties and provides accommodation for more than 7,600 students nationwide.

- Works with over 500 landlords, ensuring a diverse and high-quality selection of student housing.
- Employs more than 75 staff members, with continued growth as the company expands into new cities.
- Focuses on creating more than just student accommodation, offering spaces designed for both study and social life, helping students make lifelong memories.
- www.loc8me.co.uk

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